Praeclara Ferdinãdi.

Cortesii de Noua maris Oceani Hyspania Narratio Sacratissimo. ac Inuictissimo Carolo Romanorũ Imperatori semper Augusto, Hyspaniarũ, & c̃ Regi Anno Domini. M. D.XX. transmissa:

In qua Continentur Plurima scitu, & admiratione digna Circa egregias earũ ꝓuintiarũ Vrbes, Incolarũ mores, puerorũ Sacrificia, & Religiosas personas, Potissimũq; de Celebri Ciuitate Temixtitan Variisq; illi9 mirabilib9, quę legẽtẽ mirifice delectabũt, ꝑ Doctorẽ Petrũ saguorgnanũ Forolulienſẽ Reuen̄. D. Ioan. de Reuelles Episco. Viẽnẽsis Secretariũ ex Hyspano Idi omate in lati nũ versa

ANNO Dni. M. D. XXIIII. KL. Martii:

Cum Gratia, & Priuilegio.

A MATTER OF TASTE

An Exhibition at the

John Carter Brown Library

Providence, Rhode Island

March-April, 1984

Cover: Title page from Hernán Cortés. *Praeclara Ferdina[n]di* ... Nuremberg, 1524.

With the early John Carter Brown signature stamp.

A Matter of Taste

Man's urge to collect, preserve, and share the wealth of experience contained in books has always had a discernible effect, although sometimes subtle, on the physical character of the book itself. Whether the collector of ideas is an individual or an institution, the volumes acquired must be protected, preserved, arranged, and made accessible; in short, they must be considered as objects. Focusing upon acquisitions made in the nineteenth century, this exhibition provides examples from the John Carter Brown Library of some of the effects that taste and trends in book collecting have had on the book as an object. It will come as no surprise that the volumes most affected are those that aroused collectors' desire for their beauty and rarity.

While in some cases an observer might contend that practices typical of the times--Mexican book brands, ink library stamps on title pages, elaborate bindings--have not affected the integrity of the book as an expression of an idea, in other cases judgment may not be so certain. Nineteenth-century collectors' acceptance of "sophistication," the gathering together of bits and pieces of several copies to make one "complete" volume, is cause for concern to a scholar whose interest lies in textual integrity. The demand for carefully constructed facsimiles to complete imperfect books encouraged the specialized talents of artists and printers, and created a skilled group of craftsmen whose copies could fool the eye of the casual observer and could also, at times, cause consternation in scholars' and collectors' circles. Indeed, it is often a fine line that divides facsimile from forgery. In utilizing "rare books" as primary sources for research, an awareness of past practices can be enlightening and can aid today's scholar in the assessment of his material.

Necessarily, examples have been grouped into broad categories: identification, embellishment, and restoration, and finally a brief exploration of some particular challenges presented by facsimiles. We focus special attention upon the series of books published by Aldus Manutius and Theodor DeBry, volumes that bear the burden of a long history of collectibility (not necessarily linked to collectors' pursuit of Americana).

The section on the Aldines points up collection problems posed by this special group of books, actively collected as early as the sixteenth century and just as enthusiastically presented to the buying public in forged (or more fairly, perhaps, in "pirated" or "unauthorized") editions.

The DeBry "Grands" and "Petits" voyages were the first attempt to present to the European public a narrative and visual overview of the discoveries occurring on the fringes of the "civilized" world. Profusely illustrated and bibliographically complex, these books appealed to European collectors of "great books" and linked their traditional approach to the less usual subject collecting of men like John Carter Brown. The Library's set of DeBry consists of nearly 100 gold-tooled red morocco volumes uniformly bound by Francis Bedford.

We have made no attempt to be comprehensive, and an astute obserer will discern that many of the books shown as examples in one category could just as well illustrate another. This exhibition has been presented, rather, as food for thought for the collector and *amateur* of books as objects and as ideas.

Catalogue and exhibition by Susan Danforth. Description of the Aldine collection by Marsha Malinowski.

CASE 1: IDENTIFICATION

Augustín Farfán. *Tratado Breve de Medicina. Mexico, 1592.*

Manual De Administrar los Sanctos Sacramentos. Mexico, 1638.

Manual De Administrar Los Santos Sacramentos. Mexico, 1731.

The book brand is a dramatic statement of ownership found most commonly on volumes with Mexican library provenance. Effective permanent identification, a brand could not be reversed. It could be altered, yes, and trimmed, certainly; but because these Mexican volumes were not sought by European and American collectors in the same way as the traditional "beautiful" and "important" books, they are less likely to have suffered trimming and gilding by European society binders and are often found in this, their original, condition.

Hernán Cortés. *Praeclara Ferdina[n]di ...* Nuremberg, 1524.

Controversy over whether or not to stamp the pages of a book with an owner's mark is not new; John Carter Brown debated the question in 1848. Initially, he mentioned book stamping only for the less valuable volumes, but apparently later became convinced that he should mark most of his collection. It is possible that he considered the red mark a lesser evil than loss or theft. Then, too, if he later decided to dispose of a book, the Brown library provenance could hardly lower its value.

Letter: John Carter Brown to John Russell Bartlett. November 14, 1848.

"What think you of the plan I have before suggested to you of having all my books stamped with my name or initials on the front or back of the fifth pages."

Bartolomeu Guerreiro. *Iornada dos vassalos da coroa de Portugal...* Lisbon, 1625.

[Willem Usselinx] *Argonautica Gustaviana ...* Frankfurt am Mayn, 1633.

A Relation of the Invasion and Conquest of Florida by the Spaniards ... London, 1686.

Although John Carter Brown did not apply the same standards used by the builders of the great private libraries in Europe in the selection of books for his collection, he did have a feeling for the proper presentation of a book as an object. *En bloc* purchases of books from the dispersed library of Henri Ternaux-Compans brought the French collector's characteristic ram's head stamp to Brown's notice and provided an example for the treatment of his own library.

Letter: John Carter Brown to John Russell Bartlett. June 5, 1848.

"The small stamp, of my crest & initials never quite filled my eye--the large ones, the J.C.B. and also the arms--such as are on my Bibles fully meet my views--now, if I had one about the size of that you had made for me, only much better done, I should like to have them affixed to a portion of my books, if they could be done in the style of Ternaux, by some skilful artist of taste and knowledge in those things,--at the same time to have the stamp in red affixed to the pamphlets and the more ordinary books.

What would be the cost of stamping books as Ternaux's are done?"

William Stephens. *A Journal of the Proceedings in Georgia* ... London, 1742, vol. 1.

Collectors typically expend great effort in the design and execution of bookplates to grace the inside covers of their books, both as a decorative mark of possession and as insurance that borrowed volumes will eventually find their way home again. Bookplates sometimes make it possible to follow the path of ownership from collection to collection, and this record of provenance is an integral part of the history of the book as an object and as an idea.

Bookplate: John Percival, Earl of Egmont (1633-1748). Trustee of the colony of Georgia.

Bookplate: John Carter Brown.

Before this volume was given to the John Hay Library, it was one of a group of rare books stolen from a private collection. In an attempt to cover his tracks, the thief removed the rightful owner's bookplate and placed this "Star Wars"-inspired design over the telltale mark left by the old plate. The West Coast dealer to whom the books were offered was suspicious of the thief's story about the provenance of the volumes--it didn't seem plausible that the books (graced by this plate) had lain unnoticed for years in a grandmother's attic.

On the basis of this and other evidence, the authorities were notified, the thief was caught and sentenced, and the books were returned to

their rightful owner. (Courtesy of the John Hay Library)

CASE 2: BINDING

Christopher Columbus. *Epistola de insulis nuper inventis.* Rome, 1493. Bound for John Nicholas Brown by Cuzin.

Samuel de Champlain. *Brief Discours* ... Manuscript, [1602]. Bound for John Nicholas Brown by Thibaron-Joly.

Bindings, of course, served purposes other than owner identification. A rare, long-sought-after book was treated as an elusive prize which, when secured, was decorated as befitted its station. Fine bindings are labor-intensive and, as such, are an endangered species. Red naugahyde can never approach morocco and, whether or not one shares nineteenth-century aesthetic taste, it is always possible to appreciate the skill, artistry, and effort that produced these superb bindings.

Jacob Steendam. *'t Lof Van Nuw-Nederland* ... Amsterdam, 1661. Bound for John Nicholas Brown by Chambolle-Duru.

Letter: John Nicholas Brown to John Russell Bartlett. June 4, 1883.

"I received a few days since your letter of May 18th and today found at the banker's the precious little Dutch tract, Steendam's "New Netherlands." This I shall forthwith take to the man recommended by Mr. Ellis as the best binder in Paris and let him repair it and put

it into one of his finest bindings--morocco, of course."

Juan González de Mendoza. *The Historie of the great and mightie Kingdome of China.* London, 1588 [i.e. 1589]

Roger Payne (1739-1797) is considered to be the first binder to establish a truly English style of binding. John Nicholas Brown's request to have his "English Mendoça" bound in Bedford's "Roger Payne style" may well have been an early effort to have a book bound appropriately according to place of publication rather than sumptuously, according to its rarity.

Letter: John Nicholas Brown to John Russell Bartlett. May 24, 1883.

"First of all I have secured a copy of the long-looked for English Mendoça. Ellis had a copy and a fine one too--only a few leaves at the end being soiled. I bought it and left it with him to have bound in red morocco by Bedford, in his Roger Payne style"

Photograph: Roger Payne

The Whole book of Psalmes Faithfully Translated into English Metre. [Cambridge, Mass.] 1640.

The Bay Psalm Book is a great rarity. This is the only perfect copy still in its original binding and the only copy containing the signature of one the translators, Richard Mather. The Psalm Book almost received an elaborate new binding at the hands of Francis

Bedford. The binder fell ill, however, and John Nicholas Brown chose not to risk leaving the book in Bedford's London shop. Frank Ellis's comment in the letter below is an early example of a growing inclination to preserve a volume in its original condition--a desire to follow the dictates of the "character" of the book.

Letter: Frank Ellis to Sophia Augusta Brown, June 20, 1883.

"I am pleased to be able to tell you that I have got back the Psalmbook from Paris admirably got up so that I think you and Mr. John cannot fail to be pleased with it. It looks now as it must have done when a pilgrim father first carried it to meeting with him, barring perhaps the waterstains inside, but to have taken those all out would have destroyed the character of the book."

CASE 3: RESTORATION

The books essential to John Carter Brown's collection were not, for the most part, the same volumes sought by European buyers in the "great books" tradition. Although certainly rare in the nineteenth century, these books of American interest contained the practical accounts and discourses which had little history of collectibility in an artistic sense and, having been used rather than merely collected and protected, their condition was often worn--pages were missing, stained, and mutilated. Additionally, bibliographic control of the material at that time was minimal. Without these records, an ordinary tool today, assessment of certain elements of the book as an object--how many copies existed and what was an acceptable standard of condition--depended solely on the personal experience of booksellers and collectors in the field. For the John Carter Brown

collection, the end result of acquiring such truly "used" books was that many volumes came to the Library in need of repair. What follows are examples (and suggestions about the possible implications) of the restorer's art.

Martin Cortes. *Breve compendio de la sphere.* [Seville, 1551]

Bedford's restoration of the *Breve compendio* was extensive. The title page (an artist's facsimile) and the repair of the paper and lost text on the facing page are truly remarkable. The binder's bill states that paper restoration alone required 97 hours of work.

Invoice: Francis Bedford to the Estate of John Carter Brown. May 10, 1875.

Increase Mather. *The Right Way to Shake off a viper.* Boston, 1720.

It was seldom possible to acquire Mather sermons in good condition. Most of this material, so important for the study of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century American religious and moral thought, required considerable investment in preservation. Bedford's descriptive bill for a shipment of Mathers is illustrative of routine repair procedures.

Invoice: Francis Bedford to Sophia Augusta Brown. October 13, 1879.

Virginia Richly Valued. London, 1609.

In 1883 John Russell Bartlett sent the Brown copy of *Virginia Richly Valued* to London for rebinding. During the process, it was

discovered that the book was missing two leaves. After some correspondence, it was decided to have the missing pages copied in facsimile. When a perfect replacement could be found, Brown would "trade up" and sell his imperfect volume. A few years later, this copy was acquired at auction. The correspondence between Brown and the bookseller Henry N. Stevens explains the effect that the presence of facsimile leaves had on the value of a rare book.

Letter: John Nicholas Brown to Henry N. Stevens. February 3, 1890.

"When last in Europe I spoke to you of a copy of Hakluyt's Virginia Richly Valued of 1609. It is bound by F. Bedford, a very good copy except that pp. 67-70 (2 leaves) are in most admirable facsimile. Can you make me any good offer for this book?"

Letter: Henry N. Stevens to John Nicholas Brown. February 14, 1890.

"Respecting your copy of Virginia Richly Valued 1609 (2 leaves in facsimile) I notice that perfect copies have sold in modern times for from £ 30 to £ 50. The facsimile leaves make a great difference in the price of a book and they are much more difficult to sell as collectors of this class of book prefer to wait till they get a perfect copy. Still it is a very rare book and I should be willing to allow £ 15 for it in exchange and trust that you will consider that a reasonable offer."

Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca. *La relacion* ... Zamora [1542].

This scarce volume, presented to the Library in 1919 by John Nicholas Brown (1900-1979), contains two facsimile leaves. A more

complete copy has not been found for a "trade up".

Letter: Frank Ellis to John Nicholas Brown. February 7, 1881.

The following passage concisely states one of the problems caused by excellent facsimile restorations.

"You may depend that every leaf is quite genuine. I would not on any account send out a book with a facsimile leaf without pointing it out, for as you say they are now sometimes so cleverly done as hardly to be recognizable."

CASE 4: FACSIMILES

Dionyse Settle. *A true report of the late voyage into the West and Northwest regions ...* London, 1577.

and

Facsimile edition printed for John Carter Brown in 1868.

As has been suggested, identification of facsimiles (and forgeries) is often not a simple matter. Fortunately, some facsimiles present themselves in a straightforward manner. In 1868, John Carter Brown privately published this edition of his copy of Settle's account of Frobisher's voyage which he then distributed to fellow collectors, friends, and scholars.

Humphrey Gilbert. *A Discourse of a Discoverie for a new Passage to Cataia.* London, 1576.

J. Harris was an artist who worked in London. His initials can be detected at the lower right of this map that was drawn to complete Brown's copy of the Gilbert *Discourse* of 1576. Harris did not always sign his work, however, and the high quality of his facsimiles created the potential for confusion, as shown in this letter from Henry N. Stevens.

Letter: Henry N. Stevens to E.B. Nicholson of the Bodleian Library, Oxford. July 4, 1893 (copy)

"He [John Nicholas Brown] says that you state that 5 copies [of the Paris Columbus Letter] are known, but he only knows of 3, viz: the two in the Bodleian & one in the University Library Gottingen ... He desires us to ask whether you have included in the 5, the copy in the Library of the late Mr. John Carter Brown of Providence, because he says that that copy is only a clever facsimile which deceived the compilers of the catalogue... Presumably it is one of the 5 facsimiles made by Harris."

Christopher Columbus. Epistola. Paris, [1493]

Christopher Columbus. Epistola. Paris, [1493] facsimile.

"Columbus Letters," the publications through which the discovery of the New World was announced to Europe, have always been highly collectible and, as such, were fitting subjects for both the facsimilist's and the forger's art. The first letter (in Spanish) was

published in the spring of 1493. Before 1498, eight issues and editions had been published in Latin and two more in German and Spanish.

It often requires a highly trained eye to distinguish between the genuine and the copy, and sometimes characteristics which signal a copy are apparent only when closely compared with a piece known to be genuine. The Paris facsimile shown here is the one to which the transcription of Stevens' letter of July 4, 1893, above, refers.

Letter: Wilberforce Eames to John Nicholas Brown. July 14, 1891.

This letter from Wilberforce Eames to John Nicholas Brown provides a superb contemporary assessment of a Spanish Columbus Letter that had surfaced in London. The heated controversy over whether it was real or fake lasted for some time.

"You ask my opinion of the authenticity of the Ellis Columbus letter in quarto.--I believe it to be an attempt to counterfeit the facsimile of the Ambrosian copy, and a very blundering attempt too. The Ambrosian facsimile, by the way, must have been lithographed from a hand-tracing, and not directly from an original photograph. In some places the words and letters are not uniformly or plainly formed, but still they could be easily recognized and understood by any one acquainted with Spanish. The maker of the Ellis quarto, however, shows his ignorance of the language in nearly every line.... But the worst part of the job is, that in order to make every line begin like the Ambrosian facsimile, the counterfeiter was obliged in quite a number of cases to omit letters or whole words at or near the

ends of of certain lines which he had carelessly spread out too much at the beginning. This of course makes the text unreadable without the help of the Ambrosian facsimile....It seems to me to have been prepared to sell as an antiquity, to those not very familiar with the language."

Giovanni Vespucci. *Von der neu gefunden Region* ... [Nuremberg, 1506]

The usual situation, reversed. The pencil note on the preliminary leaf states that this German edition of Vespucci was, for many years, thought to be a facsimile. Careful examination by Wilberforce Eames established it as genuine.

CASE 5: SOPHISTICATION

In the book world, sophistication is defined as the process through which sections of various copies of a particular edition of a book are combined to make one volume which is bibliographically complete. These days the practice is frowned upon, but in the nineteenth century it was more acceptable, understood by dealers and collectors alike. This is not to imply that collectors lacked an appreciation of original condition. Outside the field of Americana, for instance, John Nicholas Brown was determined to acquire only perfect books, and he regularly rejected copies that had been too often through the hands of the binder and restorer. It was unrealistic, however, for collectors to expect to achieve the same standards of condition for books of American interest. When these titles appeared in nineteenth-century London bookshops and auction rooms, it was apparent that previous owners had seldom treated them as precious posessions.

Leyes y ordenancas nueuamete hechas por su Magestad ... Alcala, 1543.

In this volume, evidence of sophistication is plain to the eye. Of the two copies used, one was large and relatively clean while the other was cropped and stained. The restorer had to clean and extend the pages of the latter copy to match.

Fray Juan Bautista. *[Huehuetlahtolli, platicas morales de los Indios]* [Mexico, 1601]

The process of sophistication incomplete. Over the years John Carter Brown, Sophia Augusta Brown, John Russell Bartlett, Rush Hawkins, and John Nicholas Brown had all tried to complete this imperfect Mexican volume. In 1883 John Russell Bartlett suggested that it be bound, though still imperfect. It was then cleaned and bound in inexpensive forell. Later, another copy was acquired and the required leaves were separated and tucked inside the newly bound volume. Still awaiting completion, both copies sit side by side on the shelves.

[Melchisédech Thévenot] *Relations De Divers Voyages Curievx Qvi N'Ont Point Esté Pvbliees ...* Paris, 1663, vol. 4.

The issues of Thevenot are highly collectible Americana, and acquisition of the many variants was a challenge few serious collectors could ignore. The typical process of completing imperfect copies is well-illustrated by this letter from Henry N. Stevens to John Nicholas Brown.

Letter: Henry Stevens to John Carter Brown. April 7, 1869.

"Mr. Lenox has told me much about your Thevenot which led me to think there must be some mistake. So I have unpacked a box of books that came from you & I find a 4th Part of Thevenot with many titles & variations. This was intended to aid in making up your copy, the duplicates only to come back to me. I will send it [again] to you tomorrow & when you have culled it over, you may return the duplicates--I think there are some leaves which even Mr. Lenox has not."

John Smith. *The True Travels, Adventures, And Observations of Captaine Iohn Smith* ... London, 1630. (From the Library of Charles II. Called the "Royal copy")

While volumes were often upgraded or completed through sophistication, there was a growing awareness during the closing years of the nineteenth century that this course of action was not always the proper one.

Letter: Henry N. Stevens to John Nicholas Brown. March 17, 1893.

"I have just come across an imperfect copy of Smith's True Travels and send it to you today. You are quite welcome to exchange any leaves from this out of the Royal copy I recently sold you if found desirable to do so on comparation. You will remember that one leaf was mended in margin. When done with please do me the favour to return this imperfect copy and the changed leaves from the Royal copy, as they will no doubt come in useful one day. Of course you will understand I make no charge for this."

Letter: John Nicholas Brown to Henry N. Stevens. April 1, 1893.

> "I thank you very much for sending me the imperfect copy of Smith's True Travels and for your offer to allow me to take out any leaves that I wish and put them in my Royal copy of the same work. I will not avail myself of your offer because I prefer to keep this book as much as possible in its original state and I think it is best not to tamper with it."

CASE 6: THE "VOYAGES" OF THEODORE DE BRY

Henry Stevens of Vermont is perhaps the most colorful figure in mid-nineteenth century book collecting circles. An expatriate Yankee dealer who settled in London, Stevens's zeal as a book scout for his wealthy American clients is legendary. Making up volumes of de Bry "Grands" and "Petits" voyages was one of his specialties, and sets of this work in the Newberry Library, the New York Public Library, and here in the John Carter Brown were assembled, in large part, by Henry Stevens.

Theodor de Bry. Great Voyages--Latin 8. Frankfurt, 1599.

Theodor de Bry. Small Voyages--German 1. Frankfurt, 1609.

> The travel narratives published by Theodore de Bry were the first attempt to present the European public with an overview of the discoveries taking place on the fringes of the "civilized world." The common division of these works into the "Great Voyages" and the "Small Voyages" has nothing to do with the importance of the particular account--simply, the format of the "Great Voyages" is larger than that of the "Small Voyages." The John Carter Brown

Library has nearly one hundred identically bound volumes of editions, issues, and variants. Not everyone, however, accepted Stevens's pronouncements on what, exactly, was to be considered a "perfect" set, as shown by this comment from Serge Sobolewski, a noted Russian collector of De Bry.

Letter: Serge Sobolewski to John Carter Brown. December 12, 1868. Translated from the French.

"I take the liberty of addressing to you some observations and some questions, to which I would appreciate an answer from you or Mr. Bartlett, on your collection of De Bry, which I know is very beautiful for I have seen some of the volumes at Stevens's shop in London. I believe that our friend Stevens imagines editions and that he pays overmuch attention to the variations occasioned by typographical errors or caprices and blunders of the binder."

Variants and editions of De Bry were still a topic of conversation a generation later, illustrated by these letters between John Carter Brown's son, John Nicholas, and Henry Stevens's son, Henry N. Stevens.

Letter: Henry Stevens to John Nicholas Brown. November 25, 1892.

"I have just run to earth after many years patient looking out, one of two parts of De Bry which have eluded all the great collectors of modern times. Ever since I secured this yesterday I have been turning over in my mind the question as to whom I should first offer

my treasure, and feeling my allegiance is perhaps due more to you than anyone else I have decided to give you the first chance and I have accordingly mailed the part to you today for your inspection. It is the third edition of Part II Florida and is so rare that I can trace only one other copy of this variation."

Letter: John Nicholas Brown to Henry N. Stevens. December 27, 1892.

"I send to you today by registered mail the part of De Bry which you sent me recently. I have not the slightest doubt as to the rarity of this book, but I do not feel like paying £ 105 or anything like that for a single part, which after all is a mere variation of parts, which I already have."

Most sets of De Bry and Hulsius preserved in institutions such as the John Carter Brown Library are "sophisticated." Indeed, legend holds that Stevens had stacks of leaves in the cellar of his shop which he collated into volumes and sets upon demand. Whether or not this story is true, it is certain that there are very few volumes that remain in original condition, as issued.

Considering this collecting history, the following letters from Frank Ellis are especially interesting. John Nicholas Brown had acquired some volumes of DeBry with contemporary hand-colored plates, very rare. Some of the plates were missing, however, and the book was incomplete. The debate in the correspondence concerns the advisability of acquiring uncolored plates which an artist would then color to match the originals.

Letter: Frank Ellis to John Nicholas Brown. July 7, 1883.

"It is Part IV which wants four plates. It is very unlikely that one could meet with another coloured copy to make it up, but there would be no difficulty to find an odd part IV & take out the wanting plates & have them coloured in the same style."

Letter: Frank Ellis to John Nicholas Brown. October 2, 1883.

"I have got the plates 3, 7, 9, 22, 24 to put in your coloured part IV of DeBry ... They are not coloured & I think it would not be worth while to have them done so to imitate the others, as it would still be but an imitation."

In the rebinding process paper was routinely washed, sized, and often, bleached. It was necessary to handle the contemporarily colored de Bry more carefully, and it is possible to make a color comparison between paper washed in the routine manner and paper that has been dry-cleaned.

Invoice: Francis Bedford to Messrs. Rimell & Son (for John Carter Brown). August 23, 1874.

"DeBry Grande Voyages (America) Part 2. Frankf. 1591.

... the whole of the Vol dry cleaned and every leaf sized with the brush (being limp & tender) a very tiresome process & mended & map detached from clumsy thick patchings and carefully mended & lined at back with fine linen tinted to match the paper of the Vol all attended with much care & trouble soaking off patches from back margins of every leaf, the whole very troublesome. 42 hrs."

CASES 7 and 8: THE ALDINE PRESS

The Aldine Press, established in Venice in 1494, became one of the most distinguished printing and publishing houses in Europe during the sixteenth century. The Aldine family, particularly its founder, Aldus Pius Manutius, achieved great technical and typographical advancements with the introduction of italic type, Greek type, and the publication of scholarly editions of significant texts in a small, inexpensive format. Publishers in Lyon, Basel, Venice, and Toscolano produced a long and successful series of counterfeited Aldine books during the sixteenth century. These illegal editions captured the textual accuracy and the physical attributes of the originals and are ample proof of the rapid, positive reception which was accorded these innovative volumes.

Dante Alighieri. *Le terze rime di Dante.* Venice: Aldus Manutius, 1502. (Courtesy of the John Hay Library)

Earlier editions of *Le Terze rime di Dante* were issued as large, imposing folios; the format of this edition, issued by the Aldine Press in 1502, is portable octavo. Produced with the aid of a precious manuscript given to Aldus by Pietro Bembo, this edition reflects Aldus' devotion to textual accuracy. Here, also, is the first use of the Aldine device. The dolphin, symbolizing speed and activity, is intertwined with the anchor representing stability and firmness: "Make haste slowly."

Dante Alighieri. *Le terze rime di Dante.* [Lyon?: Balthazard de Gabiano?, 1503?]

This is a counterfeit of Aldus' *Le terze rime di Dante*, 1502. The attention to detail and accuracy is of particular interest; from

signatures to type, this text matches the original. A tell-tale sign of fraud is the absence of a colophon statement giving the name of the printer and the place and date of publication (every text from the Aldine Press includes such pertinent information). In addition, the wide spacing of the title words differs from the narrower spacing of the Aldine original. Signatures and gatherings provide another indication of the piracy; the original Aldine edition's last two gatherings are marked G8 and H4, but this text finishes with one gathering marked G12 signalling a discrepancy in the production of these two texts.

Dante Alighieri. *Le terze rime di Dante.* Venice: Aldus Manutius, 1515.

The title page of this 1515 counterfeit is a facsimile of the title page of a genuine 1502 Aldine Dante. Although the colophon states that Aldus printed this text, the absence of the Aldine insignia and the difference in type reveal that this is not the case. It is impossible to state definitively from when, where, and whom this text emanates, but several have been attributed to presses in Venice, Lyon, and Toscolano.

Tito Vespasiano Strozzi. *Strozii poetae, pater et filius.* [Basel?: Westheimer?, between 1535 and 1540?]

The illegal reproduction of Aldus' *Strozii poetae pater et filius* is further evidence of the widespread popularity of the Aldine octavo. The presence of the anchor and dolphin insignia leads one to believe that this is an Aldine, yet the absence of any publication statement

triggers questions as to the authenticity of this text. In addition, Aldus divided his edition of *Strozii poetae* into two books with separate paging and signatures. This copy, however, has continuous paging and signatures which sets it apart from the original Aldine.

Lucanus. Venice: Aldus Manutius, 1502.

With commentary by J. Sulpicius and corrections by Aldus Manutius himself, this text, synthesized from primary manuscripts, embodies the skill and accuracy that earned the Aldine Press its fame. Most likely because of its high level of scholarship, this Aldine edition was illegally reproduced throughout southern Europe.

Lucanus.

The first and rarest counterfeit copy of the Aldine edition of 1502, this publication corresponds with the original Aldine edition in textual content and format. Yet, the lack of any information regarding place and date of publication as well as the famous Aldine anchor and dolphin, reveals that this text belongs to the long and successful series of unauthorized Aldine editions.

Catalogue of Aldine Editions and Rare Classical Works in the Library of John Carter Brown. Providence, 1862.

John Carter Brown's personal catalogue of his Aldine collection reveals that he was unaware that counterfeit Aldine editions were among his possessions. Entry 4 describes the 1515 edition of Dante as an authentic Aldine. Recent research by Marsha E. E.

Malinowski of the John Carter Brown Library, however, has revealed that this text is a counterfeit of the original Aldine edition of 1515 with a facsimile of the title page from the 1502 Aldine.

"4 Dante col sito, et Forma dell' Inferno tratta dalla istessa descrittione del Poeta. 8o Venetiis. 1515. Wanting first two leaves of second title."

Letter: F.S. Ellis to John Nicholas Brown. August 15th, 1885.

Although the Brown family was fooled by counterfeits, they were not the only dupes among collectors. Just as the popularity of the Aldines during the sixteenth century induced other publishers to pirate the Aldine designs and compositorial practices, other collectible editions led unscrupulous dealers to be so daring as to make up facsimile titles and prefaces and to attach them to worthless texts. Discussing the authenticity of the Ellis Columbus Letter in quarto, this communication from F. S. Ellis to John Nicolas Brown sheds light on the the scandalous practices of a book dealer in the late nineteenth century.

"... I do not know whether you read the London 'Atheneum'--there was an account of an elaborately contrived forgery in it a few weeks since. His modus operandi was to manufacture a title and preface and to supply the body of the book by some worthless volume--the scoundrel presuming on the buyer not looking beyond the title for some time at least...."

CASE 9: MAPS

Abraham Ortelius. *Americae Sive Novi Orbis, Nova Descriptio.* (Courtesy of JoAnn and Richard Casten)

Abraham Ortelius. *Americae Sive Novi Orbis, Nova Descriptio. In: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum.* Antwerp, 1603.

Maps of geographical importance that are also decorative are more likely to have attracted the facsimilist's (or forger's) attention than less attractive productions. The map on the left is a forgery, copies of which have sold in recent years as originals. Although its deficiencies are obvious in comparison with the genuine map on the right, it could be quite convincing on its own, especially if shown framed. The most important evidence that it is a forgery is the size of the copperplate mark--the plate of the copy is larger than that used for the original.

CASE 10: A MATTER OF TASTE

In May, 1886, John Nicholas Brown bought this copy of Boccaccio's *La Ruine des Nobles Hommes et Femmes* (1476), an example of fine printing from the press of Colard Mansion. When purchased, the book was bound in vellum and was, on the whole, in excellent condition. The dealer through whom the volume was acquired recommended that restoration be kept to a minimum--a few pages could be mended and a case should be constructed for protection.

Letter: F.S. Ellis to John Nicholas Brown. July 20, 1886.

"As to the question you propose, it is a mere matter of fancy--the binding unquestionably is only a rough binding of the last century,

(if my memory serves me,) but certainly not the original--still the condition of the paper is that in which it issued from the hands of poor Colard Mansion and in its present condition you have the advantage--a very great one to the bibliographer--of seeing the strings of the binding & being able to see how the sheets were made up--the late Mr. Bradshaw of Cambridge University (Engl.) used always to lay great stress on the importance of this point, and he was one of the best bibliographers who ever lived. When once this volume has passed throught the hands of the washer, "restorer," and binder, it will be to a certain extent sophisticated--I should keep it as it is--but as I began by saying, it is after all a matter of taste and feeling--there is also this--so long as the volume is in its present state you can always bind it, but once bound you cannot return it to its now condition."

The Boccaccio, enclosed in a morocco case by Zehnsdorf, arrived in Providence in the fall of 1886. After some consideration, Brown sent the book to Paris where it was rebound in black morocco.

Invoice: F. Cuzin to John Nicholas Brown. October 18, 1887.